

NOTES

STATEWIDE:
As of April 2001,
there were
100,796 children
in out-of-home
care throughout
the state.¹

Indicator

Children placed in out-of-home care and in adoptive placements

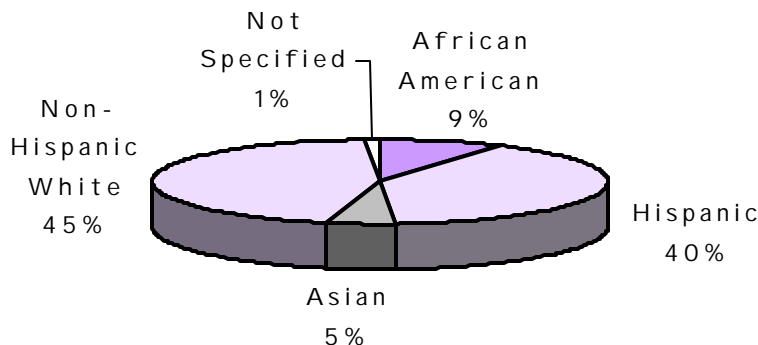
Definition

Dependent children of the Juvenile Court living in out-of-home care (relative and foster care), including those who are placed in adoptive homes.

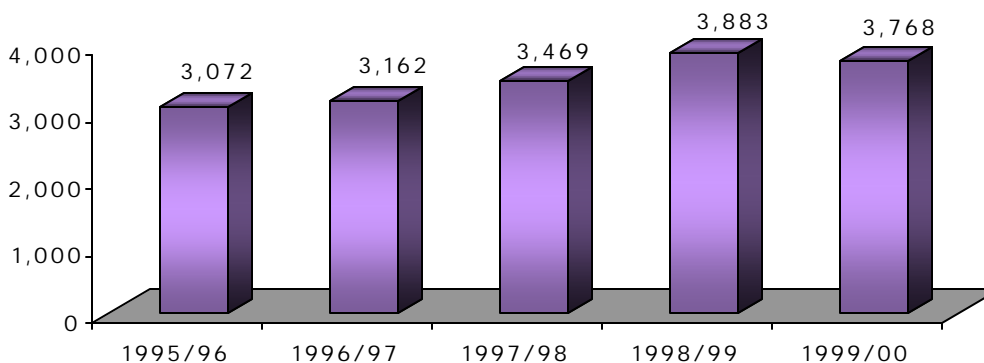
Findings

In 1999/2000, there was a monthly average of 3,768 children in Orange County placed in out-of-home care. As of March 2001, approximately 49.5% of these children were females and 50.5% were males. The largest group of children was Non-Hispanic Whites, 45%. Hispanic children were the second largest group at 40%, followed by African American 9%, Asian/Pacific Islander 5% and 1% were listed under other ethnicity or not specified. Additionally, most children were 6 to 12 years of age, 39.7%.

Ethnicity of Children in Out-of-Home Care in March 2001



Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care



Trends

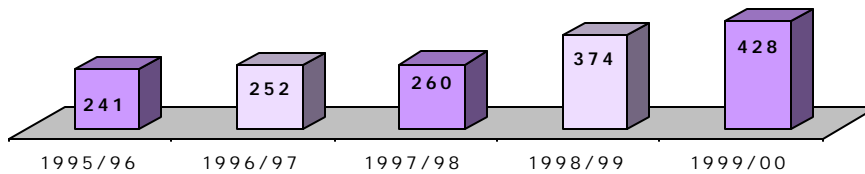
In 1999/00, Orange County had a slight reduction in the monthly average number of children in out-of-home care, reversing an upward trend since 1995/96. The 1995/96 monthly average was 3,072 compared to 3,883 in 1998/99, a 26% increase during this time span. The FY 1999/00 average of 3,768 reflects a 3% decrease from FY 1998/99. The number of adoptive placements has continued to rise to 428, an increase of 14% from last year and 78% since 1995/96.

RELATED INDICATORS:

- Substance-exposed Infants
- Child Abuse Reports
- Child Abuse Dependency Petitions

OUT-OF-HOME CARE and ADOPTIONS

Number of Children Placed in Adoptive Homes



Summary

The decrease in out-of-home placements and concurrent increase in adoptive placements reflects, in part, the results of additional funding and programs to increase and expedite permanency efforts for children. However, the types of placements have remained relatively static. As of March 2001, 36.9% of children were placed with relatives, 22.7% in Foster Family Agency Homes, 17.6% in group homes, 14.4% in Foster Family Homes, 4.9% in temporary shelters (including Orangewood Children's Home (OCH)), and 3.6% were in other placement types.

Innovative new programs and activities have reduced the length of stay in some placements. In 1998/99, the average length of stay for children at OCH was 26.4 days (compared to 29.1 days in 1997/98). The average length of stay continued to decline throughout 1999, dropping from 21.8 days in June 1999 to just 15.4 days in December 1999.

Also, an assessment of the average length of children's existing placements¹ during FY 2000 indicate that the greatest proportion of children, 37%, were in their current placement 6 months or less. Also, 21.1% had been in their current placement 6 to 11 months, 21.5% between 12 to 24 months, and the remaining 20.4% were in their current placement 25 or more months.

Implications

Considerable national, statewide and local attention on child welfare services has fueled a growing concern about the number of children growing up in out-of-home care, often for long periods of time. Too often these children are not able to reunite with their family or attach to a new permanent one. Responding to the increasing concerns, Congress enacted the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) in November 1997. The federal government mandated that permanency planning efforts for children should begin as soon as a child enters foster care and should be expedited by the provision of services to families. These services are designed to safely divert children from foster care when possible and to further increase adoptions.

Orange County's Social Services Agency's implementation of innovative services has reduced the average length of stay in OCH, reduced the overall number of children in out-of-home care, and increased adoptive placements.

¹Indicates the length of time the child(ren) has been in their current placement, not necessarily the entire length of time the child has been in out-of-home care; the latter is referred to as the entire "placement episode," an un-interrupted period of time.

NOTES



SEE
SUPPLEMENTAL
TABLES FOR
ADDITIONAL
DATA

NATIONWIDE:
For the April to September 1999 reporting period, there were an estimated 568,000 children in foster care. The average age of a child in foster care at the time was 10 years old.²

In fiscal year 1999, there were 46,000 children adopted from the public foster care system.³

DATA SOURCE:
Orange County
Social Services
Agency

NOTES:
¹State of California, Department of Social Services
^{2,3}U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

SUPPLEMENTAL TABLES: SAFE HOMES & COMMUNITIES

Indicator

Adoption Placements

Children and Family Services Adoption Placements, FY 1990/91 – FY 1999/2000

Month	90/91	91/92	92/93	93/94	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00
July	9	10	15	7	13	26	26	15	28	27
August	10	17	17	17	21	14	14	17	36	34
September	10	17	71	17	14	22	16	17	28	30
October	11	21	17	7	30	24	24	23	34	45
November	13	16	20	16	24	14	14	20	32	22
December	20	10	21	15	18	18	17	22	34	33
January	11	16	11	19	22	11	19	21	34	34
February	9	8	15	14	8	19	33	21	24	30
March	6	16	13	18	21	22	27	24	37	56
April	11	18	16	13	21	28	20	24	29	54
May	10	12	10	20	17	21	22	21	28	31
June	7	31	14	26	15	25	20	35	30	32
Average	11	16	20	16	19	20	21	22	31	36
Total	127	192	240	189	224	241	252	260	374	428

Source: County of Orange Social Services Agency.